



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of California*

*McGregor W. Scott
United States Attorney*

*501 I Street, Suite 10-100
Sacramento, California 95814*

*916/554-2700
Fax 916/554-2900*

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*Contact: Patty Pontello, 916-554-2706
Available at: www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae/home*

**NORTH STATE MAN ORDERED TO PAY \$18 MILLION
IN RESTITUTION FOR SPANISH FIRE**

REDDING--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that JASON HOSKEY, 26, of Willows, CA was sentenced today in Redding federal court by United States Magistrate Judge Craig M. Kellison. The defendant was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$18,205,507.04, sentenced to 5 years probation, and is barred from entering the Mendocino National Forest for 5 years.

The defendant pled no contest on September 7, 2004, to a misdemeanor charge of leaving a fire unattended. According to court records, HOSKEY admitted setting a "warming fire" when he became lost while hunting on September 27, 2003, in the Mendocino National Forest. HOSKEY said the fire escaped control when he fell asleep. Known as the Spanish Fire because of its origin in the Spanish Creek area, the fire ultimately burned 6058 acres.

The Forest Service had issued an order prohibiting campfires in the Mendocino Forest because of the extreme fire danger. HOSKEY smoked several cigarettes at the site of the fire's origin - also a violation of the forest order - and Forest Service officers found an ammunition shell casing that a ballistics expert matched to HOSKEY's hunting rifle.

According to Certified Law Student John C. Whidden, who prosecuted the case, the restitution order represents the total loss to the United States Forest Service in suppressing and rejuvenating the burned area.